

Mrs. M. B. Skaggs, Vera Carrothers, and Margarette Morse); three, November 20, 1938 (James Akers); one, December 27, 1941 (Arthur Fuller); three, December 31, 1941, and one, November 27, 1942 (Raymond Hill).

I have carefully checked these records with the observers. Skaggs informs me that he and his companions observed the sandpipers with glasses, in good light, at a distance of about 25 feet, and noted the characteristic dark coloration of head and breast, yellow at base of bill, and yellowish-orange legs. The description tallies with Akers' and Fuller's observations and with my own.

On December 31, 1941, I had one of the three sandpipers seen that day under close observation for over an hour, and took 35 feet of 16 mm. colored film, using a three-inch telephoto lens, set at distances of from 12 to 25 feet. I have shown this film to J. Van Tyne and some of his associates at the University of Michigan, who agreed in identifying the movie "specimen" as a Purple Sandpiper.—RAYMOND W. HILL, 3316 Kenmore Road, Shaker Heights, Cleveland, Ohio.

Glaucous and Great Black-backed Gulls at the Western End of Lake Erie.—While the rest of the lake is still jammed with ice, the thaws and westerly winds of early March commonly bring open water along the shallow western end of Lake Erie. As the shore-fast stacks and sheets of ice slowly disintegrate, flocks of gulls gather to feed on the winter-killed fish in the cracks of the ice and in the muddy pools at the shore.

During the two or three weeks that these conditions usually last, I have seldom failed in the last three years to find at least one Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) and (though less frequently) one or two Glaucous Gulls (*Larus hyperboreus*), among the hundreds of Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus smithsonianus*) and Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*).

These two northern gulls have been considered rare in this region, and though other observers and I made regular sight records, their occurrence in Michigan was not proved by specimens before 1943. Our seeing these birds so regularly during the last three winters, I believe, is only partly explained by the fact that we knew when and where to search. The evidence points to an increase in numbers of both species, especially of the Black-backed. In previous years the Glaucous might have been overlooked frequently, but it seems unlikely that so conspicuous a bird as the Black-backed could have been missed often.

Although similar conditions seem to attract both gulls in their greatest numbers, there are interesting differences in their behavior here. The Black-backed is more regular than the Glaucous; it is the most wary of the gulls seen here; it has never appeared before a freeze-up in Lake Erie, and it is seldom seen after the ice has vanished from the lake; it is rarely seen away from the open lake; birds which look fully mature outnumber immatures 7 to 1. In contrast, the Glaucous may appear at any time from the onset of winter to the end of April; it may be approached at least as easily as a Herring Gull; it has been seen on several occasions along the marshes, estuaries, and rivers near the lake, and on one occasion an individual was seen feeding on skinned muskrat carcasses in a field; individuals vary widely in amounts of buff in the plumage, and every one observed closely enough to discern this character had the dark-tipped mandible instead of the orange-red mark of the fully adult bird.

The Glaucous Gull, which had been observed eight times in seven years, beginning in 1934 (L. W. Campbell, *Birds of Lucas County*), was seen four times in 1941, four in 1942, and four in 1943. Before 1941, no more than one bird was seen on one day, but two were observed on April 13, 1941, and two on March 21, 1942. Although one was seen as early as November 29 (1936), and one as late as June 6 (1937—specimen taken at Little Cedar Point, Ohio, by Campbell), most have appeared between mid-January and mid-April. In all these observations we have eliminated the possibility of confusion with albino Herring Gulls by direct

comparison with individuals of this species present at the same location. Campbell and I took a subadult Glaucous Gull, the first Michigan specimen, at Halfway Creek, Erie Township, Monroe County, February 27, 1943.

The Great Black-backed Gull was first noted in this region on March 3, 1928, and a total of 13 were recorded in 12 years (Campbell). No more than one was seen in a day until January 8, 1939, when two appeared at Little Cedar Point, Lucas County, Ohio. Then, early 1940 brought 4 records and the winter of 1940-41, 9 observations, with a maximum for one day of 5, on January 4 at Erie Beach, Monroe County. In early 1942, 11 were seen, with a peak of 6 on March 15 at Erie Beach. In early 1943, 26 were noted, with the high point on March 7, when 11 were counted in the eight miles of shore between Bolles Harbor and North Cape, Monroe County. The earliest date for Black-backs is December 22 (1940), when two were seen after an unusual thaw had cleared the lake of ice following an earlier freeze-up. The latest—the only April record—is April 18 (1942). I took an adult Black-backed Gull, the first for Michigan, along the beach of Erie Township, Monroe County, March 21, 1943.

This specimen, and the February 27, 1943, specimen of the Glaucous Gull, were placed in the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology.

The observations included in this report were restricted to week-ends. All figures neglect possible duplications between different days, but are corrected for such duplications in any one day. The territory covered fairly regularly extends from Little Cedar Point, Lucas County, Ohio, north about 12 miles airline to Bolles Harbor, Monroe County, Michigan. Between these two extremes it includes several miles of the lower Maumee River and the irregular shoreline of Maumee Bay. Other observers who contributed to these data are William Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Fred E. Stearns, and John Stophlet, all of Toledo.—HAROLD MAYFIELD, 3311 Parkwood Avenue, Toledo, Ohio.

The Great Gray Owl as a Predator on Pocket Gophers.—On June 9, 1941, I observed a Great Gray Owl (*Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa*) in the Bridger Mountains, about 20 miles northeast of Bozeman, Montana. The locality was in the upper Canadian Zone, at 7,000 feet elevation. The day was cloudy and dark, with occasional spatters of rain. The owl's presence was first given away by the squawking of a Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), which chased the owl from tree to tree and finally into a stand of dense lodgepole pine and Douglas fir, where the owl was lost to sight.

At 1:15 P.M. I saw the owl in a 25-foot Douglas fir at the edge of a small mountain meadow. Its perch was near the end of a branch about 12 feet from the ground. Within a few minutes the owl made three swoops from this perch, apparently without catching anything. On the fourth swoop it hit the ground with considerable force and in a minute or two flew away with a dead pocket gopher (probably *Thomomys talpoides*) in its talons. An attempt to follow its flight was unsuccessful, and after searching the immediate area for a possible nest I returned to the original meadow. I was astonished to find the same owl, to all appearances, sitting in the same position on the same perch. It again made several swoops, and nine minutes later flew away with another pocket gopher. Fourteen minutes later it was back on the same perch. By 4:30 P.M. the owl had thus caught a total of four gophers and one mouse. The mouse was eaten on the ground where it was caught, but all the gophers were carried away.

The four gophers were caught in the same spot. The first caught was probably heard digging by the owl, which gave every indication of listening to some sound before swooping. Inspection of the spot while the owl was away revealed that the owl had apparently broken through the thin roof of one of the feeding runways of the gopher's burrow. Lack of turf (due to constant tunneling by the gophers in this area) would make such an action easy. The other three were probably caught